

there have from time to time flourished in unlikely places, trees of righteousness:—such as Thomas a Kempis inditing his "Imitation of Christ" in the midst of course and lazy friars,—or that monk of Mount Ararat whom Henry Martyn found walking with God amidst the superstition and grossness of an Armenian convent. And just as the florist is filled with rapture when in some unexpected region he alights on a specimen superb in its glory, and for the moment deems it quite matchless,—so, when in the dry places of Church History or in the dreary expanse of secular society, we chance to encounter a fervent believer, in the gladness of surprise and in the contrast with all around we feel as if his beauty were peerless, and as if no culture could compete with the freshness and fulness of his free and Heaven-fostered development.

But it is the will of Christ that his people should dwell together; and for this purpose he has provided that sacred inclosure, the Christian Church. Fenced round, so as to exclude the boar of the forest and the mischievous spoiler,—its generous soil is kept clear of weeds, and in graceful groups and mutually-sustaining adjustments God plants his people there in families. And if even among thorns the lily was fair,—if even on the open heath the thyme and the myrtle shed exquisite odour,—that lily is lovelier now as it stands among gentle companions who do not tarnish or tear it, and the fragrance of these gentle refugees is richer as it comes and goes amidst the blended joy of all the incense-breathing summer.

This garden is fenced. It is a "garden enclosed." Around it is the wall of fire, the Divine protection; and the more visible wall of human demarcation and ecclesiastical discipline. In every age God protected and preserved his people; and even in the days of fiercest persecution—when it looked as if the hedge were entirely broken down—and the wild beast might devour it at his pleasure,—even then in some Roman catacomb or Colosyrian valley or Waldensian fastness, God hid his remnant and kept up a seed to serve him. And for the better conservation of true religion, He has appointed a government in his Church. He has intrusted it to those whose business is to tend it and keep it; and whilst they do their best to root out immorality and error, they are also to do their utmost to foster weak faith and restore infirmity,—binding up the bruised reed, restraining the extravagant offshoot, and restoring to its right place the wayward shoot which quits the supporting espalier.

In this garden there is a great variety. There are plants famous for their beauty, and others for their medicinal virtues; some that are prized for their delightful perfume, and others for their "pleasant fruits." Not only is it an orchard of pomegranates, with its avenues of cypress, but there are spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, trees of frankincense, and all the chief spices. It is man that creates monotony. It is man that fills a garden with a repetition of the self-same vegetation. It is man that clothes entire communities in grey, or drab, or russet, and who tries to reach perfection by making each the facsimile of his fellow. But, like the great Creator, the new-creating Spirit loves variety; and in the Church of Christ there is room for characters as diverse as the rustic Amos and the imperial Solomon, as Moses so meek and much-enduring, and Paul so self-asserting and so spirited, as John so ethereal and contemplative, and James so homely and so practical. And just as we see in a garden a whole plot devoted to a favourite flower, a border where none but carnations or verbenas bloom, so within the great inclosure of Christ's own Church, are many distinct communities,—"churches," as we call them, but in reality only so many clumps or denominations within the one great Church; and to the eye which is not entirely wedded to a particular tint or pattern, there is a beauty in the groups which bring richly together distinctive attributes;—in Presbyterian order and Wesleyan fervour, in Congregational liberty and Anglican obedience, in Moravian devotedness and Quaker contentment, in the godliness which makes the Lutheran so happy and endearing in the life that now is, and which fixes the Calvinist so sublimely on the life that is to come. And as with communities, so with individual members; there is boundless and beautiful variety. There are flowers so fair that whilst you eye them, you kindle up and become for the moment a brighter,

sunnier man; and between the leaves of your bible or memorandum-book you treasure up one blossom of the heath, or the heart's-ease to recall that vision of delight. And there are flowers so fragrant that though you care not to take their picture,—like the myrrh of the spikenard they have no peculiar grace nor any brilliancy of bloom,—you love the spot they haunt, and as you pass there comes over your spirit a visitation soft and soothing, which you scarcely notice for the moment, but which makes you bless their memory. And so there are lovely characters,—Christians whom it does you good to look upon; whose beauty of holiness beautifies the beholder, so that in their presence he is actually a more generous or unworldly man; and quotable Christians,—men whose good deeds or edifying words you can chronicle, so that long after they are gone you can still open the biographic record and recall in unfaded freshness the trait of goodness or the word in season.

And there are fragrant characters. You can scarcely define their excellence; you cannot quote their brilliant sayings, and their deeds do not make anecdotes: and yet such a sweet savour of Christ surrounds them, and with such an atmosphere of love and goodness do they fill their daily sphere, that the nooks to which memory loves to fly back and nestle are the bowers which they gladdened, and the homes which they blessed by the perpetual June of their presence. But besides the beautiful and the fragrant,—the characters which shed over the Church's face its loveliness and which fills its precincts with a heavenly charm, there are the fruitful,—the pomegranates and pleasant fruits,—the men to whose substantial services, to whose thoughtful kindness, and generous deeds, and systematic labours, the world is so much indebted:—Gaius mine host, Tryphena and Tryphosa who labour in the Lord,—the evangelists who go everywhere preaching the word,—the teachers who spend and are spent in our weekday and Sunday schools, the Dorcas who makes garments for the poor,—the landed proprietor or the private citizens, who visit from house to house, and who endeavour to elevate in intelligence and moral worth the poor and depressed around him. And although less popular, by no means unimportant, are the bitter herbs, the antidotes and tonics, which also find a place; for there in need for myrrh and aloes as well as roses and lilies. We may not like the sharp reprovor, the stern and uncompromising reformer, so well as the mild and bright-beaming philanthropist; and yet that reprovor may be the truest benefactor; and there would be little scope for the philanthropist, if he had not as his pioneer the energetic reformer. It is sad ignorance of the requirements of human nature to disparage men who fulfilled so great a function as Latimer and Knox, as Cartwright and Melville, as Clarkson and the Haldanes:—men who in their loyalty to Truth forfeited much present popularity, and who kept up the Church's tone by the comforts they renounced and the sacrifices they endured in striving against error and sin.

Good Books.

Good books! written in the olden time, of man's untrammelled thinking—and read, studied, admired and almost adored by a hundred generations before us! Good books! redolent of the virtues and graces of all earth's previous goodness and loveliness, filled with the histories of those great and noble men whose deeds built nations and whose words instructed them, crowded with the events of empires whose power and glory covered the earth as with a mantle of light, and teeming with the beautiful but sorrowful stories of the toilsome progress and the eventful fortunes of science, liberty and religion! Good books! bursting full of the wisdom, the wit and the philosophy of those in honour of whom realms take their names, and to whose characters the world is proud to do homage, like the sapphire sky with its spangles of gold, thick set with the radiant glories of virtue, holiness and truth, and instinct with a living power to enkindle in the heart of their lowliest readers, a fire as pure, as diffusive, and as transforming as divinity! What a treasure are they to this world of ours! And what a source of all goodness, honor and nobleness.—*Allyn's Report.*

WONDERS.—Two things are matter of daily astonishment to me—the readiness of Christ to come from heaven to earth for me; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven for him.—*S. Pearce.*

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Harmony of Scripture.

[No. II.]

DEAR BROTHER,

I have more work for my esteemed father in the ministry (Rev. Mr. Tupper) who has condescended to elucidate texts of scripture which appear to clash with each other. His explanation of those already furnished, have been as the morning light to not a few in those parts, who are in the habit of glancing at your valuable journal. Long may his useful life be spared to the Church of God, and in his efforts to turn the sons and daughters of men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, may he be abundantly successful!

Many who take the C. Messenger, are not acquainted with Sacred Criticism, or with Biblical interpretation: yet on comparing the Rev. Mr. Tupper's elucidations with what is clearly revealed in the word of God, they at once discover or see their harmony, and are reminded of the sayings of Job, "How forcible are right words!"

APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS.

6. "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, in so much that we despaired even of life." 2 Cor. ii. 8.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x. 13.

7. "That ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." 2 Thess. ii. 2.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Phil. iv. 5.

8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8.

"Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John iii. 9.

9. "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." John v. 31.

"Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true." John viii. 14.

10. "By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified." Gal. ii. 16.

"Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works?" James ii. 21.

11. "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Gen. viii. 22.

"For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in all the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest." Gen. xiv. 6.

12. "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Exod. xx. 5.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezek. xix. 20.

13. "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him." Prov. xxvi. 4.

"Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Prov. xxvi. 5.

UPSILON.

Solutions.

6. It is not certainly known to what particular scene of persecution the Apostle alludes in the text first cited; but he evidently speaks of one in which he and his associates had narrowly escaped death. They were indeed pressed above their own strength. God, however, who frequently promotes the spiritual welfare of believers by trials, made this affliction subservient to the good of His persecuted servants, by teaching them thereby not to trust in themselves, but in Him who raiseth the dead. In this very instance was evinced the faithfulness of JEHOVAH, indicated in the second passage, in not suffering them to be tempted above

what He enabled them to bear. (See Deut. viii. 16. Ps. cxvi. 6. 2 Cor. i. 9, 10.)

7. The whole duration of time is as nothing in comparison with eternity, (Ps. xc. 4, 5. 2 Pet. iii. 8.) and consequently the most remote event connected with the present state may be considered near. Moreover, the inspired writers call the gospel dispensation, as compared with the former, "the last days," or "the end of the world." (Isa. ii. 2. Acts ii. 17. Heb. i. 2: ix. 26.) It was therefore consistent for the Apostles to speak of the second coming of Christ as drawing nigh. (James v. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 5. Rev. xxi. 20.) The Thessalonians appear to have concluded from the language of Paul, (1 Thes. v. 1—3.) that Christ was immediately coming to judge the world. He therefore corrects this misapprehension, and informs them that in this sense the day of Christ was not actually at hand; since there came prophecies to be fulfilled, the accomplishment of which must require a considerable space of time. (2 Thes. ii. 1—8.)

8. The former of these texts conveys in the idea, that he, who deems himself absolutely free from sin does not "know the plague of his own heart." (1 Kings viii. 38, 46. Job. ix. 20. Prov. xx. 9. Eccles. vii. 20. James iii. 2.) The latter shews, that a regenerate person does not indulge himself in known sin; but that a holy principle restrains him from vice, and disposes him to "live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world." Titus ii. 12, 14.) The man who flatters himself with the expectation of reaching heaven without self-denial, or abstinence from sinful indulgence, and the diligent pursuit of holiness in heart and life, deceives himself to his everlasting ruin. (Ps. lxxvi. 18. Matth. i. 21: vii. 22, 23. Luke xiv. 27. Heb. xii. 14. James i. 26.)

9. The witness which one bears of himself may be true in point of fact; but it is not usually accounted valid, or sufficient in law. In this sense the word (*althes*) rendered true, is evidently used in John v. 31: viii. 17. (Compare Deut. xix. 15.) Our Lord therefore adduced also the testimony of John, of the works wrought by himself, of the Father and of the Scriptures. (John. v. 31—39.) Having thus established the validity of his testimony, He subsequently maintained that it ought to be regarded as true, or valid, especially as the Father also bore witness of Him. (John viii. 13—18. Matth. iii. 17: xvii. 5.)

10. No doctrine is more clearly taught in Scripture, or more explicitly stated, than this, "That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God." Paul adduces the case of Abraham as an illustration and a confirmation of it; since he was justified prior to his reception of circumcision. But James shews, in perfect unison with Paul's statement, that the faith whereby one obtains justification before God is living and operative; and that the good works produced by it evince to man, that he is in a justified state. (Rom. iii. 20, 28: iv. 1—3, 9—12. Gal. iii. 6, 11. James ii. 14—26.)

11. As there are usually exceptions to general rules, so there may be also to general promises. The occurrence of partial floods, by which many perish, is quite compatible with the declaration, "Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." So likewise is the occasional visitation of affliction by famines in certain localities, with the assurance given, that "seed time and harvest" shall not be again universally interrupted, as they had been by the flood. (Gen. viii. 21, 22: ix. 11, 15. Isa. v. 9.)

12. Children that "hate" God, and following the steps of their ungodly parents, "fill up their measure," may reasonably expect to share with them in the consequences of their iniquity. It is true, moreover, that the crimes of parents do sometimes involve their descendants in calamities, as for instance, disease or disgrace, "to the third and fourth generation." The law of Moses, however, forbade the punishing of children for crimes committed by their fathers. (Deut. xxiv. 16.) So according to the statement of Ezekiel, men are directly responsible for their own deeds only. As the piety of parents will not avail to the saving of their ungodly offspring, so neither will their impiety exclude from heaven such of them as turn to God through Christ. (Ezek. xiv. 20: xviii. 2—5, 10—18. Matth. iii. 9, 10. John vi. 37. Rom. xiv. 12.)

13. The adage "Circumstances alter cases," seems to be implied in those texts. If a man